

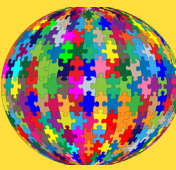


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AUTISM SOCIETY
Improving the Lives of All Affected by Autism
Maine



Maine

Autism Connections

Thank You Bull Run Striping



Fall 2020

Sponsoring Events is very important to Rick Dionne, the owner of Bull Run Striping. He has been a sponsor of the Ride for Autism for many years. Rick's company has been in business for 24 years. He started as a very small company with just a paint machine in the back of a pickup truck. Over the years his business has grown, and he travels all over the state to stripe parking lots. He has met lots of business owners and has many customers who recognize his truck. Striping does depend on the weather and this year there has been an abundance of sunshine. Being in business for such a long time also has provided him with the opportunity to help teach his son how to work with him.



His son Ben has autism. Being able to show Ben how to help him has been very rewarding. Ben's job is to place cardboard at the end of each line, so the lines are always straight and once they have been painted, he picks them up and moves to the next set of lines. He also has learned where to get stencils out from the trailer and lay them down on the ground for painting. Once his dad paints the stencil, he picks them up carefully and puts them back in the trailer. He also has learned how to clean the stencils at home which needs to happen weekly. It has been very rewarding for both Rick and Ben.

Maine **Autism Connections**
A publication of the
Autism Society of Maine

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Maine Autism Connections is a quarterly publication of the Autism Society of Maine
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Winthrop, ME 04364
Phone: 1-800-273-5200

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Send article ideas and suggestions for our newsletter to:
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Visit us online at:
<http://www.asmonline.org>

Stay up-to-date for
Legislation issues, fund-
raising events, volunteer
opportunities, and
upcoming happenings.



<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Autism-Society-Of-Maine/107781499258293>



President's Message

Old Fashioned or Well-Established?

Around 15 years ago someone told me that they had looked into supports/resources for Autism and thought that "Autism Society," sounded old fashioned so they went with the group that had a more modern sounding name. Unfortunately that group disbanded within a few years, a victim of not having wide spread roots. Meanwhile all these years later, Autism Society of Maine is still going strong!

As Autism Society of Maine approaches its 45th anniversary next year I have been thinking about the advantages of a well-established and reliable organization. Certainly the COVID-19 pandemic has tested the strength of many not for profit groups. Fortunately ASM has risen to the challenge of supporting individuals and families in creative ways despite the restrictions on face to face contact and large groups. Our executive director, Cathy, office staff, Sue, Tara, and Tena and our Autism Information Specialists around the state, continue to help in many ways, sometimes 'zooming in' for Individualized Educational Plans for school aged children and youth as well as attending Person Center Planning meetings for adults, free of cost to the individuals. Webinars and recorded library selections have been added to our resources, Facebook Live and Zoom are becoming familiar platforms.

In order to stay strong we have counted on widespread support of our members and friends of ASM. The state provides a grant under the condition that we do our part by raising funds. Our fundraising has 'gone virtual' for now and we are pushing a membership drive because every contribution helps. We sorely missed the opportunities to WALK with our families, have summer camps and a family retreat this past summer but we have forged ahead. There will still be a fall conference at no cost to families who want to attend in whatever format we can manage. Our virtual annual meeting is on for September 25th when we will welcome new Board Members and revisit accomplishments of the past year. It will not be in person but we will have a guest speaker, Dr. Matt Siegel, also a past ASM Board Member. As always we will thank our volunteer Board and paid staff for their hard work. So many long held traditions are morphed, but recognizable, in a new format. ASM is here for you, just message, email or call.

This will be my last newsletter article as at this annual meeting I will virtually, "hand over the gavel," to our incoming president, Tiffany Rooney. I am confident she will lead us through these challenging times with ASM remaining as strong as ever. It has been a privilege to serve as a board member for so many years and the role of president feels like a capstone. We could not have predicted the odd ending to this two year term but I have enjoyed the challenge, the opportunities to meet so many of you (especially at WALKS) and to work with our dedicated staff and executive director who all give so much of themselves. I remain among you as a life time member of our society (an option I highly recommend, you don't have to remember to renew every year). We are a strong, well-established community!

Nancy Ponzetti-Dyer
President Board of Directors

Editorial Notes: Maine Autism Connections and Autism Society of Maine programs and services are made possible by donations from people like you and funding from the Maine Department of Health & Human Services. We hope you will also visit us online at <http://www.asmonline.org>, where we have a great deal of information available about autism, programs, resources, news, a calendar of events, legislation and more.



Autism Society of Maine's Annual Meeting

Friday, September 25th, 6:00pm to 7:15pm

We are excited to announce new board directors to our team! In addition, we are honored to present awards to those nominated for their outstanding contributions to the autism community.

Special Guest Speaker: Dr. Matthew Siegel

Dr. Siegel is Vice President of Medical Affairs for the Developmental Disorders Service of Maine Behavioral Healthcare, an Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Pediatrics of Tufts University School of Medicine, and Faculty Scientist II at Maine Medical Center Research Institute. Since arriving in Maine 12 years ago, he has developed a nationally recognized continuum of treatment and research for individuals with autism, intellectual disability and co-occurring emotional and behavioral challenges.

Presentation: "Increasing Access to Behavioral Healthcare for People with Autism in Maine"

Dr. Siegel will discuss the new Autism & Developmental Disorders Treatment Facility currently being built in Westbrook. He will talk about the new services it will offer for children and adults along with already existing services that will be expanded.

This will be a virtual meeting on Zoom and registration is required:

[Register Here](#)



14th Annual Ride for Autism



Date: September 19, 2020
Ride choices: 10, 25, 50 Mile
Place: Wherever the Journey Takes You

This year's ride will be a **VIRTUAL** event!

[Register](#)



Due to concerns surrounding COVID-19 we have decided to make our 14th Annual "Ride for Autism" Event virtual this year. Because we are not able to hold the event in person we are waiving the registration fee. Please note, we will not be offering T-shirts this year. Please consider donating in lieu of the paying the registration fee. There is still time to get a team together and collect some donations. The weather is ideal for biking. You will be going at your own pace and can choose your own time. Pick your distance 10-mile, 25 mile, or 50 miles. Take a picture or video of where you are riding and send them to info@asmonline.org we would love to share your experience and let others know of your participation and inspiration when we go **LIVE** on Facebook **September 19 @ 2pm!** For every \$100 you raise, your name will be entered into a drawing for some great prizes!! For more information, click [here](#).

Please fundraise! Now, more than ever, our community needs us, and we need you! Because of the impact of coronavirus our fundraising will be down by nearly 50% this year.

VOTE! VOTE! VOTE!



Voting is one of the most impactful things you can do for yourself and your community.

People with disabilities deserve to understand how to vote and who to vote for. ASM has created a website page called "2020 Election" that shares toolkits, videos and resources that can be very helpful to anyone needing to learn more and prepare for the upcoming election on November 3, 2020.

Did you Know?

Only 16 million people with disabilities voted in November 2016 elections, a turnout rate 6% lower than that of people without disabilities.

Make your voice be heard. **VOTE.**

For more info: click [here](#).

ASM Fall Conference



Saturday October 31, 2020

Keynote: 9:00 am - 11:00 am

Breakout 1: 11:00am - 12:15pm

Breakout 2 - 1:00pm-2:15pm

This year's conference will be a little different, we are going virtual!

With under two months before our Fall Conference we decided we would not wait any longer to make the decision.

The Keynote speaker, Dr. Kerry Magro will be presenting "28 Years Of Autism: From Then Till Now". This presentation from award-winning national motivational speaker Kerry Magro on how he got to and survived the education experience growing up being on the spectrum and how his experiences, both good and bad, can help students with disabilities from early childhood to the transition into adulthood. Kerry will present on his experiences with therapies focused on his early development, how he founded a disability awareness organization and a non-profit for special needs housing, his work on 3 best-selling books and much more!

Dr. Kerry Magro will also be presenting a segment for adults with autism. We will present question and answers and allow for direct question and answers from the participants. That session will be from 11 am to 12:15 noon.

In the afternoon join Executive Director Cathy Dionne for a session with parents. As a parent herself she understands how we all can learn from each other. We will use this session to ask those hard question and to share our stories of success.

9:00 am to 10:45 am- [Register](#)

Keynote speaker presentation

11:00 am to 12:00 pm- [Register](#)

Dr. Kerry Magro speaking with adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder

1:00 pm to 2:15 pm- [Register](#)

Afternoon session with the Executive Director to have a questions and answers segment.



Back To School

By Tena Hinds



Who knew things could get so disruptive??? Not only for students, but for entire families as well. I thought back in March that students would finish out their school year in person. I could not have been more wrong. Now we are looking at an ever changing, different model from district to district, plan to return to the 2020-2021 school year. We are working with many families to support individual needs for their student with ASD. It is proving to be quite a challenge.

We do keep up with the Guidelines that are being issued through DOE, DRM and straight from the Governor's office. You can view the most recent guidelines by clicking on this [link](#). Unfortunately, I think DOE guidelines will continue to be fluid as they relate to the safety of students and staff based on the status of covid reported cases in their local districts. On the other hand, the DRM guidelines will remain until there is a change with the Federal Regulations through IDEA.

Please do not hesitate to call if you have questions or need guidance with school related issues.

Autism Information Specialist

Welcome

We are happy to welcome 4 new Autism Information Specialists to the Autism Society of Maine. AIS support families and agencies as well as individuals who are struggling with navigating, either, the educational system, the Maine Care system, or life in general.

Shilo Goodhue joins from Buxton, She has been working in the special education field for 11+ years and will be a great support to families in Southern Maine.

Jennifer Frey joins from Bangor. Jennifer is a parent of a child with ASD and works at the Bangor Public library. We welcome Jennifer.

Kathy Vanadia is also from Bangor. She is the parent of an adult child with ASD and was a previous AIS back in 2005. Glad to have her back on board.

Morgan Lancaster joins from Readfield. Morgan has experience working with individuals age 2 and older. Presently Morgan works to support Adults with Developmental Disabilities.



COMING SOON!!!

Face Masks
Available in 3 sizes

Toddler
Child
Adult

Another Day at the Office

By Tara Perry

Corona has taken its toll on all of us, it has been almost 7 months since our worlds have been turned upside down. From searching and hoarding toilet paper to finding the latest trend in face wear, 2020 has not been typical! We have all been doing our best to cope and get by. Changes can be seen everywhere and ASM is not immune. We had to move from the comforts of our cozy office, (the 4 of us secretly use this space as a get away from our crazy home lives at times) to creating an "office" in our homes, while sharing the space with our darling families. (Note the hint of sarcasm in that last statement) While we all love our families dearly, trying to participate in a zoom meeting or record a video can be a daunting task when sharing workspace with family and pets. My cats have joined staff meetings on more than one occasion and while recording a read aloud book, my darling son felt the need to see how loud he could yell my name. The cats also liked to hinder the recording process, jumping up and knocking the camera over or pushing the book off the desk. I cannot say that working from home was dull!

From the beginning we have tried to have resources available for all our families. This led to a crash course in technology for us here at ASM. While we all know just enough to be scary, it was time for ASM to really join the digital age. I need to also mention that it was at this exact time that we got our new computer system up and running. We were kind of learning as we went on this one, new emails, new programs etc. We had to find ways to stay connected to our members and the community. What would they need? What would be helpful? What would they enjoy? In the 4 weeks that the ASM staff worked from our homes, we brainstormed daily on how to handle our new situation. Webinars were a definite need, to get helpful information out to all and read aloud books to hopefully give a parent just a few minutes of quiet. I would start with the read aloud books, this led to its own foray of issues. I had to figure out the best way to record these books. Thankfully, having a portable web cam, piles of books, empty boxes and a hockey stick I was able to create a piece of work worthy of being featured on the Red Green Show! (Please google this if you have never seen an episode)



It was now my job to research Zoom. Is this the right fit for us? Well, as it turns out-yes, it is. This was completely new to me, (and the rest of ASM) I dove in headfirst and studied the tutorials, read all the forums, and taught myself

It was time for Cathy and me to go LIVE! This was very stressful, more so for me than Cathy I think, if our first live event did not work, we were going to look pretty silly, but in addition, I would have to answer to the boss! No pressure there! If any of you were lucky enough to join our first couple of webinars or FB live events, I am sure we gave you a few laughs. You are welcome. I would like to say that this was all planned for your entertainment, but I would be lying. We have become pros at this whole thing! We have even branched out to an online teen social group as well as a parent support group.

Thankfully, we are a small office and we have plenty of space, so we were able to get back to the office fairly quickly, the 4 of us have our own areas so socially distancing is not an issue. Unfortunately, we have been busy cancelling some of our favorite events. It seems surreal to have had April pass with no Autism walk! We really missed seeing everyone! We have also had to cancel both of our summer camps as well as our Family Retreat, our summers usually have us running around like mad men, trying to be sure we have everything for each location and each event. We take pride in these things taking place without a hitch! This summer has had us in a bit of a depression not being able to see you all! We cannot wait to be able to hold our events in person once again! Our Ride for Autism will also be a virtual event this year, so if you feel like taking a ride through your neighborhood with the family, we would love to see the pictures! You can send them to info@asmonline.org

This brings me to our biggest dilemma in the whole Corona debacle- not being able to hold our largest fundraising events has put a strain on things here. Our fundraising is such an important part of what we do. Not only does it give us a chance to be out in the community with families, it is how we fund our programs. Our fundraising helps to buy books for our library, buy supplies and pay for the locations of our Summer Camp. It also helps to fund our teen social group, our invaluable AIS program, hire speakers for our conference and family retreat and so much more! We want to thank everyone who has continued to fundraise even though we are only able to host these events virtually.

Why Become A Member of ASM?



By becoming a member of ASM you are helping to connect families and individuals in Maine to valuable resources, information, people and programs to help them obtain the best quality of life possible.

By becoming a member of ASM you are helping to provide presentations and workshops to providers, educators, employers and community members to help spread awareness and teach others about autism.

By becoming a member of ASM you are helping to advocate for families and individuals at the State house.

By becoming a member you are also helping to fund the following programs that are so important to families, individuals and the general community here in Maine.

- **Lending Library**- a free service to provide informational books and DVDs to anyone in the state.
- **Autism Information Specialist Program**- A free service to connect an individual or family with someone who can help them navigate the DHHS system, Voc. Rehab, assist with filling out forms and applications or just provide general support, whatever is needed.
- **Summer Camps**- (Camp Summit & Finding the Pieces) Free day camps for families, provides children with autism the chance to experience camp in a safe, nonjudgemental environment. Open to paid members.
- **Family Retreat**- An annual weekend for the whole family to come together, relax and have fun. Open to paid members.
- **Fall Conference**- A free event in Bangor, a chance to bring great speakers and information to a rural area.
- **Teen Social Group**- A chance for teens to hang out with their peers who truly understand them and allow them to be themselves.

For more information on how you or your business can become a member of ASM please contact us:

www.asmonline.org
800-273-5200
info@asmonline.org
library@asmonline.org

Everyone who renews their **membership** will receive a coupon for a **20%** discount on any purchase from the ASM Store!!

If you **sign up** as a NEW member, ASM will send you a **free** coffee mug embellished with a Temple Grandin quote!



ASM 1st Virtual Walk For Autism

By Cathy Dionne



ASM had the very first Virtual Walk for Autism on August 30. Not knowing what to expect or how to put on a virtual walk I think we did pretty good. We learned several things along the way. Going from a 1200 in person event to a virtual event and hoping to have families participate and share their videos and pictures was the goal. Did we meet our expectations? Yes, we did the best we could with the restrictions that our state still has in place.

Families sent in pictures of their walks they went on and we even had a few videos. I have to say I missed seeing our families in person, the children, and their siblings along with the adults. On August 30 we went live on Facebook to thank those who sent in pictures and videos and to thank our sponsors who donated back in the fall and early winter. It was great to be able to give a shout out to those who joined us live and we thank you for that. As you can see by some of the photo's here, we had a variety of pictures from around the state. We are all keeping our fingers crossed the 2021 will be a great year for everyone, good health, able to hold events with no limitations, all kids back in school, and business is open.

Financially we were off from past walks. Last year walk brought in \$59,567 and this year to date \$18,500. Let us get this number up at our next walk which we usually start to plan now for April 2021.

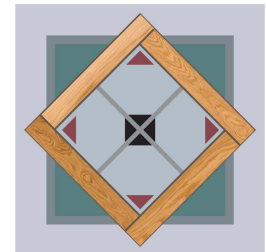
Thank you to our top sponsors

Platinum



Diamond

Foothills Flooring & Tile



South Paris, ME



Community Helpers

By Susan Vincent

33 Elmwood Helps the Autism Community During COVID-19

During the months of May and June, the 33 Elmwood Restaurant of Westbrook provided meals to 24 families who have a child with autism or autistic adult. This was such a wonderful act of kindness for the community and meant so much to our families!

"Each time we get a gratuity for an order we save 100% of the money and use it to provide a few meals a week to families who are working hard to care for their autistic children. We have partnered with ASM to help identify the families who need some food love. While it is not much, we want to do all we can help people in our community as much as we can in these challenging times."

[33 Elmwood Restaurant](#)



Birthday Fundraisers

From the months of March thru August \$7,148 has been raised by [Facebook's Birthday Fundraisers](#) to benefit ASM! This is an amazing amount of donations! 100% goes directly to ASM! Facebook covers all fees for donations made to charitable organizations. We want to thank the following people who supported ASM with a birthday fundraiser:

Valerie Butler
Renee` McFarland Nguyen
Diana Opert
Matt Heel
Ria Ferris
Matthew Dionne
April Collins
Joel Mckinley
Corinne Shaw
Kiley Robinson
Amanda Emery



Toby Hartford
Smiley Greenier
Frank Gagne
Michelle Webber
Dorothy Pearl Glidden Smiley
Beth Larrabee
Sandy Doyon
Cary Sue Danforth
Chelsea Hubbard
Sandi Merrill-Bisson
Ashley Lynne

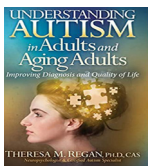
Do you want to make a difference this year? If your birthday is listed on your facebook page, you will automatically get notification by facebook when it gets close to your big day, for the option to host a birthday fundraiser. If your birthday is not listed, you can go to directly to the fundraiser tab on your page and start from there.

Welcome to the ASM Library

ASM's Lending Library is a valuable and free resource for parents, caregivers, educators, children and professionals working with children and adults on the autism spectrum. The Lending Library is a FREE resource for Maine residents. The collection can be viewed on the ASM website or you may request a printed list to be mailed to you. Stop by the office, or have material sent to you (we will include return shipping label) by calling or emailing: 1-800-273-5200 email: library@asmonline.org
Visit our online library page [HERE](#)

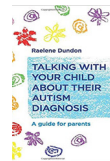
The library has its own room with a TV to watch DVD's. Children are always welcome to play with toys or read.

NEW BOOKS!!



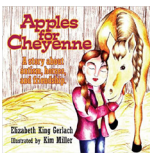
Understanding Autism in Adults and Aging Adults

Understanding Autism in Adults and Aging Adults is a one-of-a-kind resource designed to improve the correct diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder in adults.



Talking to Your Child About Their Autism Diagnosis

Telling your child about their autism diagnosis can be daunting. Will they be better off for knowing? What's the right way to tell them? Should you inform anyone else too?



Apples For Cheyenne

Apples for Cheyenne is an engaging children's book about a girl with autism who finds friendship through her time with Cheyenne, a gentle horse.



Sometimes I Roar

Join Brody and his friends as he learns to manage his emotions during his birthday party.

Email- Social Media- Online Groups



The Autism Society has a vibrant facebook community uncluding parents, professionals, and anyone interested in autism. If you are not already a friend to our facebook page, we welcome you.



Searching for autism information on the web can be overwhelming. The ASM website has relevant autism information and resources for Maine Residents.



We have a great collection of videos and will be adding more throughout the year!



Follow us on Twitter as we 'tweet' about autism!



Sign up to get interesting news and updates delivered to your email inbox from ASM!



My Autism Team: A reputable and friendly place to connect with other parents in Maine.

Donations

In Memory

Tristan Asher Sawyer
By Linda Adams

Philip Marquis
By the Vaillancourt Family

Beatrice Semrow
By Lameis and Ryan Dromgoole
Nancy & John Watkins
Colleen & Thomas McKiernan
John Lafferty

Carole A. (Hurley) Thibeault
By Norma Bouchar
Janet Trott
William Cockburn
Robert Emerson
Ray Labbe & Sons
Nancy Pinette
Sarah Lancaster
Kay George

Membership Renewals

Richard Webber & Jenna Stevens
Patricia Lewis
Harry Bonish
Sandra Merrick
Tiffany Rooney
Rosemary & Hollis McGlaufflin
Cathy & Mark Simonson
Kim Webber
Brigid Rankowski
Bobbi Jo Boisvert



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Justine Capraro
Moe's Original BBQ, So. Portland
Tiffany Rooney
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Marston's Marina
United Way of Kennebec Valley
Dorothy Ashley
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Mary Hershey
Marsha Merdinger
Cheryl Lulias
Margaret McCarthy

ASM Store



Silicone Chew Necklaces
Animals & Shapes- **\$9.00**
Raindrops & Circles- **\$8.00**



Lanyard
\$6.00

Autism Society of Maine
72 B Main St, Winthrop, ME 04364
Call: 1-800-273-5200

Items can be seen
and ordered from ASM's online [store](#)



Magnets

Small **\$3.00**
Large **\$5.00**



Puzzle-Magnet
\$6.00

Window Cling
\$3.00



Stretchy
\$4.00



Wristband
\$3.00



Glass Pendant
Sm. **\$10.00**
Lg. **\$12.00**



Glass Earrings
\$15.00



Lapel Pin
\$5.00



Folding Puzzle Tote
\$16.00



Charm Bracelet
1 Charm
\$8.00



Owl Charm
\$3.00



Autism Charm
\$3.00



Colored Heart Charm
\$3.00



Spacers
\$1.00